

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-22, without prejudice, and add new claims 23-44 as follows.

Claims 1-22. (Cancelled).

23. (New) A method for charging for services in a communication system supporting a Diameter IP protocol, comprising receiving a request to establish an IP session from a user of the system; and initiating an account with an account controller of the system, wherein the step of initiating an account comprises transferring sponsorship information to a charging system, the charging system being responsible for monitoring of the account; the method further comprising establishing the IP session; and initiating the monitoring of the account.

24. (New) A method according to claim 23 wherein the sponsorship information is transferred from an application server.

25. (New) A method according to claim 23 wherein the account is initiated responsive to an account request message.

26. (New) A method according to claim 23 wherein the monitoring of the account is initiated responsive to an account request message.

27. (New) A method according to claim 23 wherein the sponsorship information is defined by at least one attribute value pair.

28. (New) A method according to claim 27 wherein there is provided an attribute value pair defining shared charging information.

29. (New) A method according to claim 27 wherein there is provided an attribute value pair defining shared percentage information.

30. (New) A method according to claim 27 wherein there is provided an attribute value pair defining shared amount information.

31. (New) A method according to claim 27 wherein there is provided an attribute value pair defining a sponsor identity.

32. (New) A communication system supporting a Diameter IP protocol comprising:

control function means adapted to initiate an IP session for a user of the system;
an application server for providing an application for a user of the system in an IP session;
an account controller for initiating an account;
a charging means for charging an IP session for a user, wherein the charging means receives sponsorship information on initiation of the account, and is responsible for monitoring of the account.

33. (New) A communication system according to claim 32 wherein the control function means is a serving call state control function.

34. (New) A communication system according to claim 32 wherein the charging means comprises an on-line charging function and an off-line charging function.

35. (New) A communication system according to claim 32, wherein the charging is initiated on the basis of a Diameter IP communication between the call control function and the charging means.

36. (New) A communication system according to claim 32, wherein shared charging information is communicated to the charging means from the application function on the basis of a Diameter IP communication.

37. (New) A communication system according to claim 32, wherein the charging means monitors the call session charges responsive to a Diameter IP communication from the call control function.

38. (New) A communication system according to claim 32 wherein the Diameter protocol is adapted to define at least one attribute value pair to define sponsorship information.

39. (New) A communication system according to claim 38 wherein the attribute value pair defines shared charging information.

40. (New) A communication system according to claim 38 wherein the attribute value pair defines shared percentage information.

41. (New) A communication system according to claim 38 wherein the attribute value pair defines shared amount information.

42. (New) A communication system according to claim 38 wherein the attribute value pair defines a sponsor identity.

43. (New) A Diameter IP protocol adapted to define at least one attribute value pair to define sponsorship information.

44. (New) A Diameter IP protocol according to claim 43 wherein the sponsorship information is provided to enable shared charging.